

VZCZCXYZ0000  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHRH #1438 1890800  
ZNY SSSSS ZZH  
P 080800Z JUL 07  
FM AMEMBASSY RIYADH  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5942  
INFO RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH PRIORITY 8855

S E C R E T RIYADH 001438

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/08/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [KISL](#) [SCUL](#) [KOCI](#) [SA](#)  
SUBJECT: NEW SUMMER CAMP REGS-- NO NEW PROTECTIONS AGAINST  
EXTREMISM

REF: A. A) 06 RIYADH 7191  
[1](#)B. B) 06 RIYADH 8003

Classified By: Political Counselor David Rundell  
for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) The Ministry of Education (MOE) announced new regulations for youth summer camps in late February and, on June 26, the creation of an oversight committee composed of 45 members from the MOE to monitor these new regulations. The new regulations state that the Ministry must approve all requests by schools wishing to hold youth summer camps. Only schools with Ministry approval will be allowed to hold youth camps during the summer months. However, there are two different types of summer camps in Saudi Arabia -- those run by the Ministry of Education and those run by charity organizations, such as the World Association of Muslim Youth (WAMY), the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), and Islamic Academy. Only the camps run by government schools are subject to the Ministry's new regulations.

[1](#)2. (S) For several years there has been criticism against youth summer camps in Saudi and claims that they serve as a breeding ground for terrorists. Last year, conservative cleric Sheikh al-Break, gave a widely-publicized and much criticized extremist lecture at one of WAMY's summer camps (Ref A). The lecture was anti-American in nature and al-Break accused many Saudi journalists of being "agents" of the West -- causing considerable public outrage. Several charity groups -- including leaders of IIRO and WAMY -- dismissed the criticism. WAMY Secretary General told PolOffs last September that increased "suspicion" surrounding summer camps resulting from their portrayal in the media as "terrorist breeding grounds" is unfounded. Dr. al-Wohaibi stated that, although it was unfortunate that al-Break's comments sparked such controversy in the media, it is "not possible to control" all of the information given during these lectures (Ref B).

[1](#)3. (C) COMMENT: At first glance, the new regulations appear to remedy incidents such as the debacle caused last summer by al-Break's lecture. The regulations also seem to support the SAG's public statements regarding the need to be hyper-diligent in preventing the spread of extremist ideologies. However, by overlooking the differences between the government-run versus charity-run camps, the regulations only address part of the problem -- and not necessarily the greatest vulnerability, i.e., charities. It is unlikely that Saudi Arabia's charities will "self-regulate," so it remains to be seen whether the SAG will now take similar measures to control the charities, such as establish a National Committee for Relief and Work Abroad. END COMMENT.  
FRAKER